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Providence, R.I. — February 6, 2020

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Rhode Island's attorney general said Feb.6 he expects to release a public report later this year with findings from his review of allegations of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic clerics in the state.

Democrat Peter Neronha continues to review the allegations to figure out what happened, what the response was and whether anyone can be held responsible in Rhode Island, one of the most heavily Catholic states.

Neronha, who met with reporters at his office Thursday, said he couldn't yet say whether any criminal charges will be filed. The challenge with such cases nationwide is that many perpetrators are dead, he added.

At a minimum, Neronha said he anticipates writing a public report and releasing it later this year to describe the allegations, the response, whether he deems the response appropriate and whether sufficient safeguards are now in place.

The goal is to write it in the style of the 2018 landmark grand jury report on sexual abuse by Catholic clergy in Pennsylvania, he added.

Neronha gained access in July to nearly 70 years of records from the Diocese of Providence for his review, shortly after the diocese released a list of 50 clerics, religious order priests and deacons it deems to have been credibly accused of

sexually abusing children, dating to 1950.

The diocese voluntarily agreed to a new memorandum of understanding to give the attorney general and the Rhode Island State Police access to all complaints since 1950, whether deemed credible by the diocese or not.

Bishop Thomas Tobin has said that he welcomes the opportunity to continue cooperating with the attorney general and state police, and that the diocese is committed to transparency and accountability in dealing with sexual abuse of minors by clerics.

Neronha said several lawyers are involved in the review, plus a paralegal he hired to work on it full time. They have sorted through about half the documents.

“There's just a tremendous amount of information,” he said. “We're going back a long way.”

Neronha said he expects to make the information public because the office is not using a grand jury at this time. Neronha asked the legislature to pass a bill to allow a grand jury to issue a report when a criminal indictment isn't returned, but it stalled last year. He is seeking similar legislation this year.

Neronha covered a wide range of topics while meeting with reporters to answer questions about his office and his approach to the work, describing himself as an “activist attorney general.”

He said he is doing more environmental enforcement, with a focus on the Providence port, and wants to do more in the health care realm through his Office of the Health Care Advocate.

Neronha also ruled out a future run for governor, saying he has no interest in that job and wants to run for reelection as attorney general.

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